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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [LE](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: TFLE01: PM SINIORA CONVOKES P-5, URGES "HELPFUL"
UNSC PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

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Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey D. Feltman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) Convoking the P-5 ambassadors on 7/14, Prime Minister Siniora urged that the UN Security Council issue a presidential statement that calls for: 1) an immediate, comprehensive cease-fire, 2) a lifting of the blockade on Lebanon, and 3) encouragement of the Lebanese government's stated intent to respect all Security Council resolutions and the Blue Line and extend state authority over all of Lebanon's territory. Such a statement could be a way to "use the problem to create an opportunity" to change the situation in Lebanon -- that is, Hizballah and its hijacking of the state's authority to make war or peace -- for the better, Siniora said. It would also help arrest a "steadily" deteriorating situation in which Iran was using Lebanon for its regional goals. End summary.

SITUATION "DETERIORATING BY THE MINUTE"

2. (C) Prime Minister Siniora convoked the P-5 ambassadors at the Grand Serail on the morning of July 14. Since he had last met with them on the morning of July 13, he said, the situation had been "deteriorating by the minute, in every aspect." Israeli retaliation for Hizballah's kidnapping of two Israeli Defense Forces soldiers had been had been "in no way proportional" as a response, and was "unacceptable." It had caused great loss of life and material damage, and, in the way it had targeted bridges and other parts of the transportation network, resulted in the "cutting up of the country into pieces."

3. (C) Siniora did not have a figure for casualties resulting from Israeli retaliatory raids that took place from late evening on July 13 to the pre-dawn hours of July 14, although he understood that the total number of casualties since Israeli operations began on July 13 had by now exceeded 55 persons. He also expressed concern about the number of injured, saying that the ratio of injured to dead approached 2:1.

CEASE-FIRE: THE SOONER, THE BETTER

¶4. (C) Siniora emphasized the importance of coming to a cease-fire arrangement quickly. Were the current situation to drag on, extremists would harness popular sentiment more and more effectively. As it was, he complained, "we are handing over Gaza and Iraq to the Iranians." Now in Lebanon, "we are being used" by Iran, and the P-5 needed to strive to bring this situation to an end.

BUILDING ON CABINET'S COMMITMENTS

¶5. (C) An immediate, comprehensive cease-fire, Siniora said, would limit the number of casualties, limit the extent of material damage, and "take advantage of the opportunity to build on" his Cabinet's stated intent to respect all Security Council resolutions and the Blue Line, and to extend the authority of the Lebanese state over all of Lebanon's territory. In doing so, it might be possible to "use the problem to create an opportunity," Siniora said.

¶6. (C) Siniora said it would be "helpful" for the UN Security Council to issue a presidential statement that built on these stated intentions, contained in the Cabinet's most recent communique. In return for this commitment from Lebanon, he urged that the P-5 work for a UN Security Council presidential statement calling for an immediate, comprehensive cease-fire and a lifting of the current air and sea blockade. Asked what the Lebanese government could offer in order to make a cease-fire proposal credible, Siniora said that the Cabinet had taken a commitment to increase the numbers and effectiveness of the Joint Security Force (the amalgam of military and police forces charged with patrolling the southern border areas).

WILL HIZBALLAH MAKE IT EASIER OR HARDER?

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¶7. (C) Regarding the possibility of a cease-fire, the Ambassador told Siniora that working toward a cease-fire would be easier were there assurances of adherence on the Lebanese side. Did the Prime Minister expect Hizballah to hold its fire, or was it more likely to make counter-retaliations on a large scale? Siniora answered that this is something he would discuss today with Hizballah officials. It would be easier to talk Hizballah into a cease-fire without "all the pressure" created by ongoing Israeli operations. Siniora was circumspect about his chances of being able to influence Hizballah, however. "To be frank," he said, "don't ask from me what I cannot achieve... you understand what we are passing through!"

COMMENT

¶8. (C) Following is the text of a paper provided to the Ambassador in the meeting by Siniora's advisors. It outlines what the Lebanese government is seeking from the UN Security Council. (It was drafted in anticipation of a Security Council resolution -- hence the title -- but remains applicable to a presidential statement.) While he did not put it in so many words, Siniora is portraying this as an opportunity to roll back Hizballah's hijacking of the state's authority to make war or peace, of which the current situation is an example par excellence. The text below is very encouraging in that it addresses issues that are anathema to Hizballah, including respect for the Blue Line (implicitly, deployment of the Lebanese army in Hizballah's place) and all UN Security Council resolutions (implicitly, this includes UNSCR 1559), work with UNIFIL on security for the south, and even re-establishment of the 1948 armistice.

ADDENDUM

19. (U) Begin text:

Elements of a UNSCR

- 1- Calls for an immediate cease fire and an end to the siege
- 2- Welcomes the declaration of the Lebanese Government about its commitment to the Blue Line and to all UNSC resolutions
- 3- Calls upon the Lebanese Government to coordinate with UN Interim Force in Lebanon in order to assume responsibility for security over its territories up to its international borders
- 4- Requests the Secretary General to immediately initiate discussions with all relevant parties to resolve the issue of sovereignty and border delineation in the Shebaa Farmlands (sic) area.
- 5- Requests the Security General (sic) to also initiate discussions regarding the reestablishment of the 1948 Armistice agreement (with needed amendments) and other bilateral issues, including prisoners, with the aim of establishing secure and stable borders for the two countries.

End text.
FELTMAN